

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereafter. [Use ~~strikethrough~~ for deleted matter (or double square brackets "[[]]" if the strikethrough is not easily perceivable, *i.e.*, "4" or a punctuation mark) and underlined for added matter.]

1. (Currently Amended) A method for modifying a software application, comprising:

identifying the operator of the software application;

acquiring an operator profile responsive to the identified operator, wherein the operator profile includes a skill level value for the identified operator with regard to the software application;

setting a threshold value;

~~configuring a functional interface responsive to the operator profile;~~

monitoring the identified operator's use of the software application to aid in determining the skill level for the identified operator; and

automatically modifying the functionality of the software application when the threshold value is exceeded by the skill level value of the identified operator;

automatically modifying an appearance of the functional interface when the threshold value is exceeded by the skill level value of the identified operator; and

displaying the modified appearance as the identified operator operates the software application.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein setting a threshold value comprises determining the number of times that a novice operator initiates a particular function offered by the software application.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein setting a threshold value comprises determining the number of times that a novice operator initiates a particular interface dialogue offered by the software application.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein setting a threshold value comprises collecting a plurality of parameters associated with the operator profile to generate a skill score.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein monitoring the operator's use of the software comprises maintaining a log of operator functional selections.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein configuring a functional interface responsive to the operator profile includes modifying at least one interface associated with the software.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein modifying the functional interface when the threshold is exceeded comprises moving functional selections to a higher-level interface within the software.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
storing the operator profile prior to responding to an operator request to terminate the software application.

9. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein maintaining a log of operator functional selections comprises updating the operator profile.

10. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein modifying the at least one interface comprises adjusting the availability of a function.

11. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the modification comprises the addition of a functional push-button to the higher-level interface.

12. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein monitoring the operator's use of the software comprises comparing the sum of each log entry with an associated threshold value.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the modification comprises removing an unused functional selection from the interface.

14. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the modification comprises adding a previously withheld function to the interface.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the modification comprises moving an interface activated by a pop-up menu selection to a dialogue window.

16. (Currently Amended) A computer based software modification system, comprising:

means for receiving information reflective of the identity of an operator of a software application;

means for receiving information responsive to the operator's ~~use of the~~ skill level in using the software application;

means for determining a threshold value; ~~and~~

means for automatically modifying an interface associated with the software application and automatically modifying functionality of the software application responsive to when a software ~~usage~~ skill level parameter for the operator exceeds the threshold value; and

means for displaying the modified appearance as the identified operator operates the software application.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the means for receiving information responsive to the operator's use comprises communicating with a history log containing a sum reflective of the instances that the operator has selected an associated function.

18. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the determining means comprises analyzing the opinions of representative users of the software application regarding familiarity with the operation of an interface.

19. (Currently Amended) An interactive software based system, comprising:

- a user operable input device;
- a user interface coupled to the input device, the user interface operable to receive at least one identifier associated with an operator of a software application, the user interface programmed to receive an operator profile associated with the operator;
- a usage monitor coupled to an output of the user interface, the usage monitor programmed to record instances of operator function selections;
- a usage logic coupled to the output of the usage monitor, the usage logic programmed to compare at least one selection threshold with an associated function selection sum, the usage logic programmed to generate an output signal indicative of a condition where the associated function selection sum exceeds the associated selection threshold; and
- an interface product manipulator programmed to modify a software application interface that contains associated functional controls and functionality of the software application in response to the output signal.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium, comprising:
logic for identifying an operator of an associated software application;
logic for obtaining information reflective of the operator's ~~use of~~ skill level in
using the software application over a current and previous operating sessions;
logic for updating the information reflective of the operator's ~~use~~ skill level;
logic for comparing the operator's ~~use~~ skill level with at least one threshold;
~~and~~

logic for automatically manipulating functionality of the software application
responsive to a condition when the operator's skill level in use of the software
application exceeds the at least one threshold; and

logic for automatically manipulating a software application interface
responsive to a condition when the operator's skill level in use of a functional control
exceeds the at least one threshold.

21. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
analyzing a plurality of different historical indicators to determine the skill
level value for the identified operator, at least one of the historical indicators based on
information obtained from the monitoring step.